

#### Members of the Board

David H. Hettler, O.D., Pres  
Paula H. Boone, O.D., V.P.  
William T. Tillar, O.D., Sec.-Tr.  
Martha N. Gilbert, Citizen  
Gregory P. Jellenek, O.D.  
W. Ernest Schlabach, Jr., O.D.



## Virginia Board of Optometry

MINI-NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2005

This is the sixth edition of the Virginia Board of Optometry's "mini-"newsletter. The one-page format is designed to get the most important news from the Board to you as quickly as possible. A message from the President and the Board's newly adopted guidance on prescribing follow as well as important information on other items of interest. For the latest information relating to statutes, regulations, policies and activities, access the Board's website at:

<http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/optometry/default.htm>.

#### *From the President...*

*Optometrists in Virginia have seen a large expansion in the treatment options for their patients. These options are now commensurate with training. I would like to urge all Virginia licensed Optometrists to read all the regulations and guidelines related to practice. The Board of Optometry website has most of the information you will need. For more information, visit the rest of the website at: <http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/optometry/default.htm>.*

*With these new options come new responsibilities. All licensed optometrists have signed a statement indicating that they have read, understand and will follow all applicable rules. Please verify that any treatment that you initiate is within your scope of practice and within the standard of care. As with any treatment, careful documentation is essential for TPA use. Thank you for continuing to provide the high quality of care that the citizens of Virginia have come to know and appreciate.*

*David H. Hettler, OD*

#### **Guidance on Prescribing of Drugs for Family or Self**

At its January 21, 2005 meeting, the Board of Optometry adopted as guidance relating to prescribing for oneself or family essentially the same policies as those of the Board of Medicine and Board of Pharmacy. These guidelines do not carry the force of law but do represent the Board's position.

##### **Bona Fide Optometrist-Patient Relationship**

As is required by the *Drug Control Act*, prescribing is predicated upon a bona-fide practitioner-patient relationship. The presence of a medical record is an essential part of a valid optometrist-patient relationship. The patient record shall contain the following:

1. An appropriate history and physical examination (if pain is present and controlled substances prescribed, the assessment of pain, substance abuse history, and co-existing diseases or conditions should be recorded);
2. Diagnostic tests when indicated;
3. A working diagnosis;
4. Treatment plan; and
5. Documentation by date of all prescriptions written to include name of medication, strength, dosage, quantity and number of refills.

##### **Self-Prescribing**

1. A physician cannot have a bona fide practitioner-patient relationship with himself or herself.
2. Only in an emergency should an optometrist prescribe for himself or herself Schedule VI drugs.
3. Prescribing of Schedule III, IV or V drugs to himself or herself is prohibited.

##### **Immediate Family**

1. Treatment of immediate family members should be reserved only for minor illnesses or emergency situations.
2. Appropriate consultation should be obtained for the management of major or extended periods of illness.
3. No Schedule III, IV or V controlled substances should be dispensed or prescribed except in emergency situations.
4. Records should be maintained of all written prescriptions or administration of any drugs.

#### **Items of Note**

- **"License Lookup."** This feature on the Department of Health Professions (DHP) website (<http://www.dhp.virginia.gov>) provides licensure verification information on licensure status as well as initial and expiration dates. It also allows inquirers to obtain all final Board disciplinary notices and orders.
- **Online-renewal.** The website also allows for on-line renewal of licenses and professional designation permits (during renewal periods). Instructions and pin numbers are sent in advance of renewals. An overview is provided on the website (<http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/mylicense/renewalintro.asp>).
- **Continuing Education Audit.** The DHP Enforcement Division will be auditing 5% of licensees for continuing education compliance for 2004.
- **Mandatory Reporting.** Signs of abuse of senior citizens must be reported to the Department of Social Services toll free at 1-888-832-3858. Their website provides the details. ([http://www.dss.state.va.us/family/aps\\_mandated.html](http://www.dss.state.va.us/family/aps_mandated.html)).
- **Professional Designations Reminder.** If you intend to practice under a title other than your own personal name as it appears on your optometry license, you must register the title as a professional designation (ref §18 VAC 105-20-50 of the Regulations). Please remember that a professional designation must be presented exactly as registered with the board and IN ITS ENTIRETY on any signage, advertisement, letterhead, or in any manner in which you hold yourself out to the public. It must be renewed annually for each location.
- **Calendar of meetings for the Board.** The Board's anticipated meeting dates for the remainder of 2005 are - Jun. 8, Sept. 15 & Dec. 9.
- **Statistics.** As of Feb. 25, 2005 there were 1,330 licensed optometrists (889 in-state), with 132 professional designations registered. There were 1,048 with therapeutic pharmaceutical agents (TPA) certification (804 in-state). The Board adjudicated 37 cases with a finding of violation in two cases and one closed undetermined.

#### **Questions?**

The Virginia Board of Optometry office is available for questions that you may have about licensure, discipline, Board policy and activities. You may reach us at (804) 662-9910, (804) 662-7013 (fax), or e-mail at [optbd@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:optbd@dhp.virginia.gov).